THE

SWINDLER

A

COMEDY.

BRITISH MUSEUM

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Aude aliquid brevibus Gyaris, et Carcere dignum
Si vis esse aliquis: Probitas *laudatur, et alget.* Juv.

LONDON 1785.

BRITISH MUSEUM

PROLOGUE.

IN courts of juſtice, 'tis the form you know,
Er'e ſentence paſs, which ſtrikes the deadly blow,
To hear the culprit pleading his defence,
Altho' to truth, he has but ſmall pretence:
Thus, I behold my judges from afar,
And bow, ye critics, at your awful bar!
For, ſcribbling:—Now before your worſhips ſtand
Arraign'd in form, I here hold up my hand;
No council fee'd, no *Alibi* can prove,
But truſt my piece to candour's general love.
A bold adventurer on the comic ſtage,
Faſhion, you know, will ſway in every age:
Dramatic bards, oft thirſting after fame,
Dreaming of laurels ſhadowing their name:
Will ſcribble on, tho' ſtill in want of bread,
A pen their fee—an inkſtand crowns their head.
Some ſeek their fortune on the South Sea ſhore,
And not content are graſping ſtill for more:
Others for riches, will an heireſs ſteal,
While ſome for lucre, ſecrets will reveal:
Some on the road, will boldly bid you ſtand,
Till fortune crowns them by the hangman's hand:
Others turn doctors, ope the friendly door,
Drain the rich purſe, but *gratis* purge the poor:
Law and religion have adventurers bold,
The means may vary—but their aim is gold:
Before this Dagon's throne, we proſtrate fall,
And glittering pelf, too oft bewitches all:
In my dramatic piece, if ſome traits you view,
Of ſharper's ſchemes, in practice not a few:
If here the unwary may a caution take,
And rous'd from impoſition tradeſmen wake,
Should cheats expos'd, no more their tricks purſue,
You'll pardon ſurely—tho' no praiſe is due.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

M E N.

Sharp	a Swindler.
Shuffle, *Decoy*	his Aſſociates.
Gripe	a Uſurer.
Trinket	a Toyman.
Buckram	a Taylor.
Reyniſh	a Wine Merchant.
Phæton	a Coachmaker.
Tinſel	a Laceman.
Tart	a Confectioner.
Furniſh	a Upholſterer.

W O M E N.

Mrs. *Sharp*	
Mrs. *Dreſden*	a Millener.

Servants, Conſtables, &c.

SCENE *Sharp's* Houſe, Pall-Mall.

THE

SWINDLER.

ACT I.

SCENE, Sharp's Houſe.

Sharp *in a Morning-Gown*, Shuffle *attending*.

Shuffle.

I Underſtand you—But if we ſhould miſcarry?

Sharp. Oh! there is not the leaſt reaſon to be afraid of that: have I not told you, I have already taken in a ſet of tradeſmen in this neighbourhood, and another in and about Covent-Garden, and by your aſſiſtance, I hope to be as ſucceſsful in my third attempt, a little further from home.

Shuffle. Well, I wiſh we may, with all my heart. But I am at a loſs to conceive how you manage it, and by what means you get ſo much credit; why you make a figure about town equal to a man of ſome thouſands a year.

Sharp. As to my credit, I aſſure you that is very good, not only amongſt tradeſmen, but with people of the firſt conſequence—I have the honour to be received by many, as has likewiſe my pretended wife; my real wife, I was certain from her education and general conduct, would never conſent to act a part in any of my ſchemes, ſo I packed her off to her relations in the country before I began to play my game, and I make no doubt, unleſs ſome unforeſeen accident ſhould happen, to be able to ſtand my ground ſome time yet.

Shuffle. But how did you manage to get into this ſituation?

Sharp. By no ordinary means I aſſure you; every body would not have hit upon it, 'tis quite new, and the merit all my own.

Shuffle. It muſt have been by ſome extraordinary means, I think, and the effect of downright genius.

Sharp. There are no means of making one's way in the world without genius, and with it, it is of little conſequence to be born to a fortune. Take my word for it, whenever you meet a poor diſtreſſed man in this town of London, that he has no genius; and juſt in proportion as he wants money, ſo much he wants underſtanding. Do you think it poſſible a man of genius ſhould want bread, amidſt ſo plentiful a harveſt of credulous fools?

Shuffle. It is very true; but come explain yourſelf, that I may profit by the means.

Sharp.

Sharp. Obſerve then—I framed a will, which I ſuppoſed to be ſent from the Eaſt Indies, and to be that of one Sharp, a perſon immenſely rich, who died there ſome time ago, I therein made myſelf a diſtant relation of his, ſole executor, and reſiduary legatee, upon condition that I took the name of Sharp.

Shuffle. Very well.

Sharp. This will I eaſily proved at the Commons, after which I produced a letter ſuppoſed to be written by the perſon who had the management of his affairs, acquainting me how immenſely rich he died, poſſeſſed of a ſum of money to the amount of ſix thouſand pounds a year.

Shuffle. Mighty well.

Sharp. I then immediately applied for an act of parliament to change my name, which being a matter of mere form, I very eaſily obtained; by this means I made myſelf the ſubject of the bon ton, and acquired the credit and reputation you now ſee me poſſeſſed of.

Shuffle. A moſt ingenious device, I muſt confeſs, and worthy to ſucceed, you merit a fortune.

Sharp. Well, do you but act the part I have aſſigned you, and you ſhall have no reaſon to complain.

Shuffle. I'll do my beſt; but you was ſaying you had taken care to ſecure a retreat, if there ſhould be occaſion; how have you ſchemed that?

Sharp. As thus; I have purchaſed a ſmall veſſel, which I always keep properly manned, and ready to put to ſea at a moment's notice—She lies off the Brighthelmſtone coaſt, in order to croſs over to Dieppe, that if I ſhould be followed, it would be to Harwich or Dover.

Shuffle. Good.

Sharp. I have twice with my family and Decoy, who paſſes for my *factotum*, croſſed over to France, one time I deſignedly ſailed in the night, and both times without giving my ſervants in town, or the fellows on board, the leaſt notice before hand, ſo that when I ſhall be obliged to make my eſcape, I ſhall be able to do it without the leaſt ſuſpicion.—Have I laid my ſchemes tolerably well?

Shuffle. Upon my ſoul you quite aſtoniſh me—a ſcheme ſo well laid cannot fail of ſucceſs.

Sharp. Why I think ſo.

Enter Decoy.

Decoy. Pardon me, Sir, I did not know you had company.

Sharp. Oh! you may come in Decoy, there are none but friends; this is the gentleman I mentioned to you, who is to aſſiſt us in our future ſchemes, (*Decoy* and *Shuffle* bow) O! have you prepared thoſe fictitious tradeſmen's bills, and likewiſe thoſe bills of Exchange that are not to come due till to-morrow?

Decoy.

Decoy. Here they are, I was coming to ſhew you them.

Sharp. Well then, we will begin to play off again to-day.

Decoy. I wiſh we may not be obliged to decamp in a ſhort time; that little ſcoundrel of a banker's clerk, has been here again this morning, aſking ten thouſand queſtions about that note of a thouſand pounds of Lord Dupe's, which you got diſcounted the day after you arrived in town from a viſit to his Lordſhip.

Sharp. The Devil he has!

Decoy. 'Tis too true—He ſays, that my Lord never drew for ſo large a ſum before; and by what I find, they wrote to his lordſhip the night before laſt; ſo that he may poſſibly be in town late to-night, or early to-morrow morning; my advice is that we go off as ſoon as poſſible.

Sharp. There's time enough yet—I am reſolved not to go till I have try'd my fortune with thoſe gentlemen that I have appointed here to-day—— S'death, I expect to make five or ſix thouſand before night.

Decoy. 'Tis worth while to ſtay for that then, but I think it would be adviſeable to poſt ſome body in the ſtreet near Lord Dupe's houſe, to give us the earlieſt intelligence of his lordſhip's arrival.

Sharp. Well thought of, that infallibly ſecures us.

Decoy. I will take care it ſhall be done.

Sharp. But pray, have you received the money from that fellow in Monmouth-ſtreet, for the eight new ſuits of laced clothes we ſent him laſt week?

Decoy. I have.

Sharp. And the money of the little Jew, for that plate from Mr. Poliſh, the ſilverſmith in Covent-Garden.

Decoy. I have that too.

Sharp. Very well—I expect another taylor here out of the city with ſix more rich ſuits of laced cloaths, they muſt be ſent immediately to the ſaleſman; I bid the taylor bring his bill, that we might ſee what they came to, and then the ſaleſman will ſee at once what he is to give us—I think he always allows half what the taylor charges.

Decoy. True—but I think that it is not enough.

Sharp. No—not if the taylor was not as great a ſcoundrel as himſelf—we muſt be contented with what we can get—you muſt always obſerve, that whenever people find they are neceſſary to you, they will always impoſe upon you.

Decoy. Well, but my advice is, that we ſhould leave town if poſſible to-night.

Sharp. If you think ſo, prepare every thing for that purpoſe.

Decoy. I'll take care of that, but I muſt go down and endeavour to ſatisfy ſome tradeſmen, who are come to aſk for part of their money, the which I ſhall pay them in fine ſpeeches.

Sharp.

Sharp. You have always enough of that ſort of coin ready at hand. (Exit *Decoy*.)

Well, do you now go and put on your boots and a ſuit of cloaths I have laid ready for you in the parlour, and take care to come into the room exactly at the right time: Decoy will aſſiſt you.

Shuffle. I ſhall minutely obſerve your inſtructions. (Exit.

Sharp. Let me read this letter over again; it is artfully written? (*Reads to himſelf,*) very well, (*Reads again,*) Good—I think he muſt have more ſenſe than I believe he has, if I do not take him in.

Enter Mrs. *Sharp.*

Ha!—How do you do, my dear? How do you like your new carriage?

Mrs. *Sharp.* So well, that I ſhould be very glad to ride in it all the reſt of my life.

Sharp. I think, my dear, this is the firſt day of uſing it?

Mrs. *Sharp.* It is.

Sharp. And I am afraid it will be the laſt.

Mrs. *Sharp.* And why ſo, pray?

Sharp. Becauſe Decoy thinks it right that we ſhould go off to-night, therefore put up every thing you have of value that will lie in a ſmall compaſs, and be ready yourſelf to go away this evening.

Mrs. *Sharp.* Very well! I have ordered Mrs. Dreſden, from the great lace-warehouſe, near St.

Paul's Church-Yard, to bring all the fineſt laces ſhe had, or could get, to ſhew me this evening.

Sharp. Then to-day we ſhall do buſineſs.

Mrs. *Sharp.* Adieu, I'll go and get things ready for this evening.

Sharp. Stay, my dear, I expect Trinket, the toyman from the city here, this evening, and you know your preſence will be neceſſary: You have not forgot the inſtructions I gave you about him?

Mrs. *Sharp.* I perfectly remember them.

Sharp. Then handle him with your uſual addreſs, and I fancy we ſhall make ſomething of him.

Enter a Servant.

Servant. Mr. Trinket the toyman from the city.

Sharp. Shew him in. (Exit *Servant.*

Enter Trinket.

My dear Mr. Trinket, pray come in; well, have you brought thoſe things I beſpoke of you yeſterday?

Trinket. I have, Sir, thoſe ſix ſetts of ſilver handled knives and forks, and all the other articles. And here, Sir, is the ſteel and gold ſword you ordered.

Sharp. Upon my word, Sir, it is very elegant.

Trinket. That ſword, Sir, I will maintain it, is of all ſwords, by much the genteeleſt ſword in town—A certain man of quality called at my ſhop, very

very ſoon after you did me that honour, who would have given me five guineas more than I charged you for it: But, Sir, I eſteem the honour of ſerving you much beyond any pecuniary advantage—I do indeed, Sir.

Sharp. Very honeſt indeed, Mr. Trinket, but it is what you are famous for; you have brought your bill.

Trinket. Pray, Sir, don't mention it.

Sharp. Well, then, if you have not, you muſt take the trouble to carry back your goods, (*offers the ſword, which Trinket declines,*) for it is my rule never to let any thing come into my houſe that is not paid for.

Trinket. Rather than make you angry, Sir, (*takes out the bill*).

Sharp. Let me ſee—ay—do, pray, Mr. Trinket, ſit down.

Trinket. Pardon me, Sir, not in your lady's preſence.

Sharp. Come, come, my wife is none of your haughty dames; my dear, make Mr. Trinket ſit down.

Mrs. *Sharp.* Sir, I beg.

Trinket. Madam, as I have the honour of your command.

Sharp. Fifty-ſeven pound eight ſhillings—Well, I dare ſay it is right; be ſo kind Mr. Trinket as to write a receipt, and here is the money—I don't

examine

examine the ſeveral articles, that is quite unneceſſary, when one deals with men of credit like you.

Trinket. Sir, you do me a great deal of honour, (*while* Trinket *is writing a receipt, and* Sharp *counting out the money.*)

Mrs. *Sharp.* So then, my dear, you will not?

Sharp. What do you mean, my dear?

Mrs. *Sharp.* Oh! you underſtand me well enough.

Sharp. Pho! my dear, you have no occaſion for them.

Mrs. *Sharp.* No, I am ſure there is no woman in town, whoſe huſband is half ſo rich as you are, that has not a very handſome pair of diamond ear-rings.

Trinket. Excuſe me, Sir, if your lady has occaſion for a pair of diamond ear-rings, no body ſhall ſerve her better, or cheaper than I will do.

Sharp. Why, Mr. Trinket, you are not a jeweller?

Trinket. Pardon me, Sir, any thing to turn a penny.

Sharp. Well, we will talk about it ſome other time.

Trinket. Excuſe me, Sir, there is no time like the time preſent.

Mrs. *Sharp.* True, Mr. Trinket—Therefore I am reſolved I will have them to-day—can't you bring me ſome this afternoon?

Sharp. Don't mind her, Mr. Trinket.

Trinket.

Trinket. I beg your pardon, Sir, but it is quite neceſſary your lady ſhould have thoſe things.

Mrs. *Sharp.* (*Angrily,*) And I will have them too.

Sharp. Well, for the ſake of peace——we muſt keep our wives in good humour, Mr. Trinket——you find it ſo?

Trinket. Excuſe me, Sir, but your lady deſerves any thing that money can purchaſe. (Sharp *takes up a newſpaper, and pretends to read.*)

Mrs. *Sharp.* Thank you Mr. Trinket—you are by much the beſt bred tradeſman I ever ſaw—you'll not fail to bring ſome ear-rings here this afternoon about ſix o'clock?

Trinket. Madam, I ſhall take that liberty.

Mrs. *Sharp.* And an aigrette, and a few fancy rings.

Sharp. Oh! as for an aigrette—I'll have nothing to do with it.

Trinket. Excuſe me, Madam, ſhan't you want a necklace too? All the people of any taſte have a diamond necklace.

Mrs. *Sharp.* So they have, Mr. Trinket, pray bring me one or two.

Sharp. Pray don't give yourſelf that trouble, Mr. Trinket.

Mrs. *Sharp.* Pray, my dear, do you mind your newſpaper.

Trinket. Madam, I have the honour to be your moſt

moſt humble ſervant. I ſhall take the liberty of waiting on you in the evening.

Sharp. Hark you, Mr. Trinket, I muſt advertiſe you of one thing. I am reſolved not to give above five hundred pounds, therefore don't bring any above that price to tempt me, for I will have nothing to do with them.

Mrs. *Sharp.* Don't mind him, Mr. Trinket, pray bring me the fineſt ear-rings you have.

Trinket. Oh! certainly, Madam; Mr. Sharp has only a mind to joke—you may depend upon it, Madam, that I ſhall take the liberty of doing myſelf the honour of waiting on you with ſomething curious this afternoon—I have the honour to be, Madam, your moſt obedient, moſt devoted, humble ſervant. (*Exit bowing.*

Sharp. Ha! ha! ha! Kiſs me, my dear—you have played your part to a miracle.

Mrs. *Sharp.* Could I do otherwiſe, and be your pupil?

Sharp. Come, come, nature has not been niggard in giving you thoſe ſort of talents——But I muſt ſtep to Decoy—there is no time to be loſt—this will prove a buſy day. (*Exit.*

Mrs. *Sharp.* I too, have buſineſs enough.

(*Exit ſeverally.*

SCENE

SCENE *A Hall.*

Reniſh, Phæton, Tart, *and* Tinſel.

Reniſh. Look ye, Gentlemen, you may act as you pleaſe, I am determined to take other meaſures. I'll come after my money no more—S'death, I have already loſt half my cuſtomers in dancing attendance here—How the devil am I to pay the bills that are drawn from Bourdeaux and Oporto, if no body pays me?

Phæton. Very true, Mr. Reniſh, and how am I to pay my journeymen coachmaſters; wages are very high, I can tell you—there is no end of all this—always an excuſe—call to-morrow, and you'll certainly be paid; damn it, I'll call no more—and when you do call, then it is, where is your bill? Have you brought your bill? We have loſt your bill—Zounds, they have had more bills of me than would ſerve to paper every room in the houſe from top to bottom, and the ſtaircaſe into the bargain—but the devil a penny of money.

Tinſel. Ay, and they have had more gold and ſilver-lace of me within theſe ſix months, than would ſerve for a border for your paper, Mr. Phæton, was the houſe as big again, but not a ſhilling of money can I get.

Tart. I am ſure they have had of me every day, for

for theſe ſix months, a finer deſert than an extravagant Eaſt India captain gives to the wives, daughters, and couſins of his owners, the day his ſhip is launched, but not a penny of money.

Reniſh. But here comes the houſe-ſteward! let us hear what he will ſay to us to-day.

Enter *Decoy.*

Decoy. Gentlemen, good morning to you, I am very glad to ſee you; how do you do?—Well, is there any good news ſtirring this morning? (*Offers his hand, which they decline.*)

Reniſh. I don't know, Sir, whether you will think it good or not, but I'll tell you a piece of news.

Decoy. Ay! Pray what is it?

Reniſh. Why, Sir, if I have not my money this morning, I'll arreſt your maſter this afternoon.

Phæton. Yes, Sir, we will every one of us arreſt him.

Decoy. Harkee me, Gentlemen, (*draws them aſide,*) you are all of you very much in the right—but mum—it hurts me to ſee ſuch a number of honeſt gentlemen treated in this manner.

Reniſh. We are very much obliged to you, Mr. Decoy.

Decoy. I'll tell you what, Gentlemen, but you are upon honour.

Omnes. Oh! yes, upon honour.

Decoy. Why, then, you muſt know, it is very near all over with him—his affairs are in a damned ſituation.

Reniſh. Then there is no time to be loſt—I'll be with him again very quickly. (*All going.*)

Decoy. Harkee, Gentlemen, I have ſomething to ſay to you.

Reniſh. Well, Sir, what is it?

Decoy. I'll tell you—come this way—He is, I know, to receive a very conſiderable ſum of money this afternoon, with part of which he intends to pay ſome of his tradeſmen, to whom money has been a great while owing, and who have threatened, as you have done, to arreſt him—Now, I believe, it is in my power to procure this money for you.

Reniſh. Ay! How, pray?

Decoy. Why, by taking away their bills, which I have, by his order, laid aſide for that purpoſe, and putting your's in the place, he is very inattentive, he'll not obſerve it.

Reniſh. Well, and will you then? We will take care not to forget you, Mr. Decoy.

Decoy. Gentlemen, your humble ſervant, you may depend upon what I ſay. (*They take him by the hand.*)

Reniſh. Indeed, Mr. Decoy, we are vaſtly obliged to you; but why won't you be ſo kind to come and ſee a-body ſome times; I can give you a good glaſs of wine, I can tell you, Mr. Decoy.

Phæton. Ay, do call and ſee us; come and eat a bit of ſupper with my wife and me; now do call, it will be friendly.

Decoy. I ſhall certainly do myſelf the pleaſure of waiting upon you—I wiſh you were all of you at home juſt now, (*aſide*) Well, Gentlemen, your humble ſervant, you'll call in the evening, but as I know it will be late before he will receive the money, don't give yourſelf the trouble of coming at ſooneſt before nine o'clock.

Reniſh. We'll take care, Sir, to be in good time.

Decoy. No, but Gentlemen, you need not come before nine at ſooneſt.

Reniſh. It's very well, Sir, I hope you won't forget us, and we will take care not to forget you.

Decoy. No, Gentlemen—only of returning home juſt as you came. (*Aſide.*)

Reniſh. Well, Mr. Decoy, your humble ſervant, I hope we ſhall find in the evening that you have been as good as your word.

Decoy. Oh! yes, yes, Gentlemen, you may depend upon that—your humble ſervant—But, I hope, you will find in the evening, that you will not be able to find me. (*Exeunt ſeverally.*)

SCENE *A Parlour.*

Enter a *Servant*, followed by *Gripe.*

Servant. Sir, if you pleaſe to ſit down, I will let my maſter know you are here.

Gripe.

Gripe. Do, my friend, I believe he expects me.

Servant. I forget your name, Sir.

Gripe. My name is Gripe! Gripe!

Servant. Yes, Sir. (Exit *Servant.*)

Gripe. What an extravagant young dog this is! how elegantly the houſe is furniſhed—Six thouſand pounds a year?—Marry, he had need of ſix times ſix thouſand pounds a year, at the rate he goes on; coach-horſes, ſaddle-horſes, race-horſes, equipages, ſervants, dinners, ſuppers, balls, drums, and maſquerades. No body in town lives like him—Intimate with all the people of the firſt faſhion. He muſt certainly know ſomething how affairs go on with the Emperor and the Dutch—he muſt—I'll ſee if I can ſift ſomething out of him, if I can, I may make a penny of it in the Alley—He cannot hold it long, though he has ſo very large a fortune—but I think I run no riſk in letting him have the money—he can ſcarce ſpend his whole fortune in one year, and twenty per cent. beſides a premium, is not very bad, no, not very bad intereſt. Let me ſee—his effects will, I ſuppoſe, arrive from the Eaſt Indies in nine months——ay, muſt thereabouts. Well, it is very fortunate for induſtrious people, that there are ſuch extravagant young fools.

Sharp. (*Within.*) Tell him I cannot ſpeak to him this morning.

Decoy. (*Within.*) He ſays, he has but one word to ſay to you.

Enter Sharp *and* Decoy.

Sharp. Ha! my good friend, Mr. Gripe, I am very glad to ſee you; why you look as young and as briſk this morning——

Gripe. Pretty well, conſidering the hardneſs of the times.

Decoy. Then, Sir, I ſhall tell him you are buſy?

Sharp. To be ſure—but do you hear—tell him I have ſpoke to both the Secretaries of State, and that I have already the promiſe of five of the commiſſioners; ſo that he may look upon his affair as done—deſire him to call to-morrow morning. I beg ten thouſand pardons, Mr. Gripe? And do you hear, Decoy, if young Mr. Saygrace ſhould call, tell him his affair goes on as I could wiſh; the Duke is quite charmed with the character I gave his Grace of him, and that I am ſure of the Biſhop's intereſt. You ſee, Mr. Gripe, how I am ſollicited.

Gripe. Ay, you people of intereſt.

Sharp. S'death, I had like to have forgot—here, Decoy!

Decoy. Sir.

Sharp. Send away this letter immediately to the ſecretary's office—if my Lord is gone, let it be carried to his own houſe; he will be uneaſy till I have given him that piece of intelligence I promiſed him laſt night at ſupper.

Decoy. Yes, Sir—Mr. Loan's clerk, the banker, ſays, he muſt ſpeak to you yourſelf, Sir.

Sharp.

Sharp. Well, I'll come to him preſently.

(Exit *Decoy.*

Now, Mr. Gripe, I am at your ſervice.

Gripe. Pray, Sir, was that letter there, any thing about the peace?

Sharp. Oh! fie, don't talk about that.

Gripe. Is there any thing known for certain yet? You can tell.

Sharp. That's a moſt profound ſecret.

Gripe. To be ſure—but I won't ſay a word—oh! no: lord, you may depend upon me——

Sharp. You muſt excuſe me—But, pray, have you brought the money?

Gripe. I have—but, come, tell me a little bit, do, pray do.

Sharp. I dare not for the world—Is it in notes or money?

Gripe. Oh! all in notes—What, I ſuppoſe the peace is ſettled?

Sharp. Don't aſk me—I don't think I ſhall want above two thouſand of that money, as I expect my own effects in ſo ſhort a time from the Eaſt Indies.

Gripe. I have brought three thouſand, and the bond is made for the ſum we agreed on. (*Aſide.*) (I'll endeavour to put him in good humour, and by that means get the ſecret out of him.) Ha! ha! ha! you may as well take the three thouſand; you'll want it for ſome genteel thing or other—— come, come, you ſhall take it—

Sharp. Well, 'tis of no conſequence, as the bond is made out—Here, Decoy.

Enter Decoy.

Decoy. Sir.

Sharp. Here witneſs this bond.

Gripe. (*Whilſt the bond is executing.*) If I could but wheedle the ſecret out of him, I ſhould be made for ever.

Sharp. (*Aſide to Decoy.*) Bid Shuffle ſtand at the door, and liſten, and take care to come in at a proper time; I poſitively will give but three and thirty years purchaſe—If he will not take the money, let him keep his eſtate, or find another purchaſer.

Decoy. It is very well, Sir, (*Exit.*

Sharp. I am really much obliged to you, Mr. Gripe—if it is in my power to ſerve you—

Gripe. Ah! marry it is.

Sharp. How, pray?

Gripe. Come, tell me, is there any thing known for certain about the peace?

Sharp. Pray, don't aſk me.

Gripe. Nay, nay, come tell me now.

Sharp. Muſt not.

Gripe. I wo'nt ſpeak of it again, as I have a ſoul to be ſaved.

Sharp. Do'nt aſk me—If it ſhould be known that I have ſaid any thing—

Gripe. It never ſhall—I will never ſpeak of it—upon my honour—there, now come—

Sharp. If I was ſure I could depend upon you—

Gripe. You may, indeed—upon my ſoul—as I hope to be ſaved.

Sharp. Well then, harkee, (*draws him aſide,*) the peace is ſettled.

Gripe. Fol-de-rol-lol-rol-lol-you are quite ſure though.

Sharp. Ha! ha! ha! ha! yes, I think ſo, if the ſecretaries of ſtate know any thing of the matter.

Gripe. (*Aſide.*) I'll run to the Alley this moment, and catch at any thing I can lay hold of. Stocks are at a charming low price—Well, I am very much obliged to you, good morning.

Sharp. You are not going?

Gripe. Yes, I muſt go—I have a great deal of buſineſs to do this morning—I am in a very great hurry.

Sharp. If you'll ſtay a moment, I'll give you the reaſon why the treaty muſt take place—Come, ſit down. (*They ſit.*)

Gripe. Well.

Sharp. Why, you muſt know, that—that the—I mean the Dutch, you take me—

Gripe. Yes, yes—

Sharp. (*Aſide.*) Why don't he come in now?

Enter Shuffle, *booted.*

Shuffle. My dear Sharp, how goes it?

Sharp. What, Sir William!—What the deuce brings you to town? How long have you been arrived?

Shuffle. About half an hour, and, I hope, by to-morrow night to be half way home again—damn the town—I would not looſe a weeks hunting and ſhooting, to be maſter of half the money in it.

Sharp. Why, I muſt confeſs, I am a little ſurprized to ſee you—Pray what brings you to town?

Shuffle. Why, money—as I was ſaying—money. You muſt know, I have now finiſhed my houſe, which the gentlemen I have employed about it, think it neceſſary that I ſhould pay for; ſo I am come to ſell out of the ſtocks for that purpoſe.

Sharp. What ſum do you think you ſhall want?

Shuffle. Why, for the houſe, and the improvement of my garden, for I have taken in a great deal of the park, I judge about twelve thouſand pounds.

Sharp. Stocks are very low juſt now; I would not ſell out juſt yet?

Gripe. (*Stepping in between them.*) Why, true, ſo they are, very low, but, in my opinion they will be much lower before it is long.

Sharp. Do you think ſo?

Gripe. (*Aſide to Shuffle.*) I am ſure of it. (*To Sharp.*) You forgot that Mr. Loan's clerk is below ſtairs waiting for you all this time.

Sharp. So I did, I muſt go and ſpeak to him; Sir William, you'll excuſe me.

Shuffle.

Shuffle. Oh! Pray if you have any buſineſs—

Gripe. Ay! ay! don't mind us. (*Exit* Sharp.) Sir, if you'll take my advice, and I know ſomething of the matter, you will not only ſell out twelve thouſand pounds, but every ſhilling you have in the ſtocks.

Shuffle. Indeed!

Gripe. Very true; I'll tell you what—but, you won't mention it?

Shuffle. No, upon my honour.

Gripe. Why then the peace is quite off.

Shuffle. Indeed!

Gripe. As ſure as you are there.

Shuffle. Sir, I am very much obliged to you—I'll go this moment and ſell out twelve thouſand pounds.

Gripe. Stay, Sir William, you are too late for the transfer to-day; beſides, I believe, I can help you to a chap.

Shuffle. Sir, I am much obliged to you.

Gripe. An acquaintance of mine deſired me this morning to procure him about that ſum—if you pleaſe, Sir William, I'll take it of you at the market price to-day.

Shuffle. Upon my word, Sir, I am quite aſhamed—you are vaſtly obliging.

Gripe. Why, really, Sir William, I do it merely to oblige you, on my friend Mr. Sharp's account—but you need not ſay any thing to him about it.

Shuffle. Oh! no.

Gripe. Well then, is it a bargain?

Shuffle. With all my heart.

Gripe. Done, (*they ſhake hands*) But now, Sir William, I do'nt think it would be amiſs if we ſhould interchange notes—only for forms ſake, binding ourſelves in the penalty of—ten per cent.—ay, that will do—for the performance of this agreement—

Shuffle. If you pleaſe, Sir.

Gripe. Well then, I'll write the notes immediately.

Shuffle. Will you be ſo kind to take that trouble?

Gripe. Oh! 'tis no great trouble, Sir William.

(*Sits to write.*)

Sharp. (*At the door, unſeen by* Gripe.) Why you have made quick diſpatch.

Shuffle. Oh! a bargain is ſoon ſtruck, when both parties think they ſhall find their account in making it.

Sharp. As ſoon as the notes are ſigned 'twill be time for me to appear again. (*retires.*

Gripe. Well, Sir William, here are the notes—I have ſigned that, will you be ſo kind as to put your hand to this?

Gripe. (*While* Shuffle *is ſigning.*) Gad I have nicked him. (*Aſide.*

Shuffle. There, Sir.

Gripe. Sir, I give you joy—you have made a very good bargain, I can tell you.

Shuffle. (*Aſide.*) A better, I believe, than you think for.

Enter

Enter Sharp.

Sharp. And, do you hear! Call at Mr. Skins, the attorney, and tell him I ſhan't want that two thouſand pounds he was to procure me. Gentlemen, I beg your pardon, that fellow has kept me talking to him all this while—but you both dine with me.

Shuffle. With all my heart.

Gripe. No, I thank you—I can't ſtay—I have a great deal of buſineſs to do. (*Going.*) Good morning to you.

Sharp. But ſtay, Mr. Gripe, I have ſomething to tell you of very great conſequence.

Gripe. Well, what is it? (*Aſide.*) Zounds, I ſhall be too late.

Sharp. Harkee! Stay, they talk of, you know who's coming in again.

Gripe. Phoo! that's nothing to the purpoſe at preſent.

Sharp. Yes, but I can tell you—

Gripe. I can't ſtay; ſome other time. (*Going.*)

Sharp. You muſt hear this. (*Fetches him back.*)

Gripe. Phoo! Zounds, I ſhall never get away.

Sharp. Harkee! They talk of (*whiſpers*) F--x and the Duke coming.

Gripe. Damn it? I don't care what they talk of; I'll ſtay no longer.

Enter

Enter Decoy.

Decoy. (*Loud.*) A letter, Sir, from the Secretary of State's Office.

Gripe. Ha! What's that?

Sharp. Only his Lordſhip's anſwer, I ſuppoſe, to that letter I juſt now ſent down.

Gripe. Pray let's ſee.

Sharp. Oh! it is not about any thing of that buſineſs, I dare ſay—There is a girl in the caſe.

Gripe. Well, let us ſee. (Sharp *opens the letter while he is reading it.*) Ha! how! what! why you ſeem alarmed?

Sharp. How uncertain is every thing in this world?

Gripe. For heaven's ſake, what's the matter?

Sharp. I am very glad I received this letter before you went away—It might have been of conſequence to you.

Gripe. I am all over in a cold ſweat—For heaven's ſake what are the contents?

Sharp. You ſhall hear, (*reads,*) "I am very much "obliged to you, my dear Sharp, for your intelli- "gence about Suckey, (but this is nothing to the "purpoſe,) I am extremely ſorry to acquaint you of "a very diſagreeable piece of news; but the treaty "is quite at an end. We have this moment received "diſpatches from our ambaſſador at Paris—'Tis all "over—poſitively no peace," (Gripe *drops his hat and*

and cane, and ſtands motionleſs,) "I will acquaint you "with the reaſon of this ſudden change of affairs, if "you will do me the favour to call upon me this "morning—But be aſſured it is impoſſible to bring "things to any agreement. My dear Sharp, adieu" —For heaven ſake what ails you?

Gripe. Oh Lord! oh Lord! I am ruined and undone.

Sharp. Ruined! What do you mean?

Gripe. Oh! I'll tell you—I had juſt agreed to take Sir William's twelve thouſand pounds ſtock there, at the market-price of to-day.

Sharp. Have you? Why, now, tell him you have changed your mind.

Gripe. Yes, but we have interchanged notes, in the penalty of ten per cent.

Sharp. That's a ſerious affair. Why would you take ſuch a ſtep without conſulting me?

Gripe. I thought to do it for the beſt. Could not you get me off?

Sharp. I'll try. Sir William, Mr. Gripe has changed his mind—he cannot take that ſtock of you.

Shuffle. With all my heart, Sir, then he will pleaſe to pay me the penalty.

Sharp. Phoo! phoo! don't be idle.

Shuffle. Here is his note. 'Tis only twelve hundred pounds.

Sharp. Come give it him back again.

Shuffle.

Shuffle. I am much obliged to you.

Sharp. He won't give it back—What can we do?

Gripe. Can't we take it from him by force, and ſwear we never gave it him?

Sharp. That's not practicable. Offer him a ſum of money.

Gripe. I'll give him ten or twelve guineas with all my heart.

Sharp. Ten guineas! you don't know how avaricious he is—and a damned cunning fellow too.

Gripe. Is he? I took him for a damned fool.

Sharp. If you could get off for a hundred, give it him—Come, return the note, Sir William, and Mr. Gripe will give you a hundred guineas.

Shuffle. There is ſome trick in all this—I muſt be upon my guard—Look you, Mr. Sharp, if your friend don't like his bargain, let him give me five hundred pounds and we are off.

Gripe. Five hundred pounds.

Sharp. Harkee me, Mr. Gripe, he is as obſtinate as a mule—you had better give him the five hundred—he will aſk you ſeven or eight by and by—have you got five hundred pounds about you? I ſaw you had a great many notes.

Gripe. No, I have not, at moſt, more than four hundred.

Sharp. Well, leave it to me, I'll talk to him.

(Sharp *and* Shuffle *aſide.*)

Gripe. I believe, I had better give it to him without

out hesitation, and make what haste I can into the city before the news transpires—I shall get my four hundred pounds back again, and perhaps four thousand into the bargain, and then it won't be a bad morning's work. I'll e'en do it.

Sharp. Well, Mr. Gripe, Sir William, to oblige me, will accept of your four hundred pounds.

Gripe. Wo'nt he take three.

Shuffle. No, Sir, that's my price—I am very indifferent about it. If you do'nt chuse to give me that now, I shall demand the whole to-morrow.

Gripe. Well, well, then Sir, there is your money.

Shuffle. And there, Sir, is your note.

Gripe. If he would die suddenly now—damn the Emperor—I say.

Sharp. But, you'll stay and dine with us.

Gripe. Dine! Zounds! I shan't be able to eat a morsel this month! and if I don't recover my money before night, s'blood! I'll never eat again. (*Exit.*

Sharp. Ha! ha! ha! Give me your hand, you have done wonders! Is not this better than eating cards and swallowing dice? than running the risk of being put behind the fire? or of being thrown out of the window?

Shuffle. Much better.

Sharp. Those are the recourses of paltry knaves —men of genius are above 'em—they seek for fame

as

as well as riches—great villains have been the admiration of every age—But come, let's in to dinner, and then I will inſtruct you in the part we are to play this evening—I have no doubt, ſome day or other of ſeeing you, like many of your betters, become a very great man, by being a very great rogue.

Shuffle. I am very much obliged to you for your good opinion.

Sharp. But reſolve, for the future, never to be concerned in paltry tricks to cheat mankind.

For *little* villains lay no claim to merit,
'Tis neck or nothing with a man of ſpirit.

Exeunt.

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

ACT II.

SCENE *continues.*

Enter Sharp *dreſſed, meeting a Servant.*

Sharp.

WELL, is he coming?

Servant. He is now below ſtairs, Sir, I ſtayed till they finiſhed the laſt ſuit of cloaths, as you ordered me not to come away without them.

Sharp. You did very right, ſend him up. (*Exit* Servant.) Now for Maſter Buckram, whom if I do not fleece—I think I ſhall be a match for him.

Enter Buckram, *followed by his journeyman, bringing in a large Bundle of Cloaths.*

Sharp. Mr. Buckram!—How do you, Mr. Buckram?

Buck. You do me a great deal of honour, Sir.

Sharp. I began to think you would not keep your promiſe.

Buck. Oh, Sir! you may always depend upon me; (*untying the bundle and putting the Cloaths into a chair ſeparately.*) I never diſappointed a gentleman in all my life—Why, there was the other day,

day, my Lord Thoughtleſs called at my houſe about eleven o'clock—I dare ſay, you know his Lordſhip—a mighty agreeable, genteel, gentleman-like, pretty gentleman. His Lordſhip has a very pretty notion of dreſs too—Buckram, ſays he, I am going to a wedding-ball to-night, I had quite forgot it till this morning; muſt have a handſome new ſuit of cloaths before night. My Lord, ſays I, that's impoſſible—it is not in the art of man—it can't be, my Lord—Pho, damn you, ſays he, ſuch a clever fellow as you can do any thing—I know you can—Well, I ſhall depend upon having it by nine o'clock at lateſt—I'll leave the taſte of it entirely to you—you have a damned good taſte, Buckram——Remember the occaſion, 'tis for a wedding——nine o'clock—away went his Lordſhip without waiting for an anſwer; and, Sir, you may believe me, as the clock ſtruck nine, I entered his Lordſhip's houſe with one of the genteeleſt ſuits of cloaths, and beſt adapted to the occaſion, that ever was ſeen, as my Lord himſelf allowed, and, indeed, ſo did all the company, as his Lordſhip told me the next day.

Sharp. Very ſurpriſing indeed.

Buck. There, Sir, there are ſix of the genteeleſt ſuits of cloaths in the kingdom; I have made them all as rich as poſſible, according to your orders.

Sharp. Very elegant, indeed!

Buck. Give me leave, Sir, to ſee this one ſuit upon your back.

Sharp.

Sharp. I fancy that is not neceſſary, Mr. Buckram.

Buck. Why, no Sir, not abſolutely neceſſary; I can't miſtake; but it would afford me infinite ſatisfaction to ſee ſo well a made genteel ſuit of cloaths, upon ſo genteel well made a gentleman.

Sharp. No, Mr. Buckram, that don't ſignify, they will fit me, I dare ſay.

Buck. I'll anſwer for their fitting you, though I had not taken meaſure of you—Lord, Sir, there is no occaſion to take meaſure of any gentleman that is ſo well made as you are—I require no more at any time, than to ſee you walk acroſs the room—that would be ſufficient for me. I'll tell you what, Sir,——I once made a ſuit of cloaths for a certain gentleman; a man of faſhion and figure about town, only, Sir, from ſeeing his picture in miniature upon his lady's arm, and they fitted him to a hair.

Sharp. Amazing, indeed!

Buck. Yes, Sir, and I would engage to make a ſuit of cloaths for the Emperor of Germany himſelf, provided his Highneſs is made according to the rules of ſymmetry and proportion—I would, upon my ſoul, Sir, undertake at the hazard of my life, to fit his Highneſs to a T, only from knowing the exact length and breadth of his Highneſs's thumb. Pray, do me the favour, juſt to walk acroſs the room, (Sharp *walks acroſs the room,*) that is ſufficient, Sir, I am ſatisfied.

Sharp. Well, now for your bill, Mr. Buckram.

Buck. Here it is, Sir—and every article charged, as I hope to be ſaved, as low as poſſible! I ſcarce get any thing by them—I would not charge a halfpenny more than is right to keep me from ſtarving.

Sharp. I dare ſay you would not, Mr. Buckram, —you ſhall have your money this moment—

Buck. Sir, you are very good.

Sharp. Here Decoy.

Enter Decoy.

Decoy. Sir.

Sharp. Pay this gentleman ſeven hundred and thirty pounds.

Decoy. Seven hundred and thirty pounds, Sir! I have nothing like that money in the houſe, Sir.

Sharp. What do you mean? Where's the money for thoſe two bills of a thouſand pounds each, that I gave you laſt week?

Decoy. Sir, they are not due.

Sharp. Due! What do you mean?

Decoy. Why, Sir, they are at thirty days after date, and did not come due till to-day. I was going to ſend for the money.

Sharp. I don't underſtand theſe things—Pray let me ſee them. (*Looks at the bills.*) Do you underſtand theſe things, Mr. Buckram? Pray inform me.

Buck. (*Looking at the bills.*) What the gentleman

man ſays is very right, Sir—they are due to-day—I ſee who they are drawn upon, and that they are accepted—your money, Sir, is as ſafe as at the bank of England.

Sharp. Why, did not you ſend for the caſh this morning? I ſhould never have appointed Mr. Buckram, if I had not been ſure you had had the money.

Decoy. Sir, the money ſhall be ſent for this afternoon. The gentleman may have his money by nine o'clock.

Sharp. Well then, Mr. Buckram, I am ſorry to give you ſo much trouble—you will be ſo kind as to bring theſe cloaths at that time, then I ſhall be happy to pay you.

Buck. Pray, Sir, ſuffer me to leave the cloaths, and at nine o'clock I'll take the liberty of calling with the bill.

Sharp. No, Mr. Buckram, I don't chuſe to take them till I can pay for them.

Buck. Oh, Lord! Pray, Sir——

Sharp. No, you muſt take them away.

Buck. Excuſe me, Sir.

Sharp. I inſiſt upon it.

Buck. I would not do ſuch a thing for the world, Sir.

Sharp. They poſitively ſhall not be left here.

Buck. Indeed, Sir, you muſt excuſe me. I have the honour to be your moſt devoted, moſt obedient humble ſervant. (*Exit.*

Sharp. Ha! ha! ha! he bit like a gudgeon in a ſhower—But come, Decoy, is the fellow below to take theſe cloaths.

Decoy. He is.

Sharp. Why then, let them be given to him immediately. I muſt be ready to draw up one more line—I have another hook baited in the next room—you will take care to forward every thing for our departure.

Decoy. I have taken care of that already.

Sharp. Well then, I think we may begin to look upon ourſelves as the favourites of fortune.

But we deſerve her gracious ſmiles to ſhare,
Who makes the greatly bold her conſtant care.

SCENE *Another Apartment in* Sharp's *Houſe.*

Enter Trinket.

Trinket. I warrant her ſhe'll make him give her the beſt ear-rings I have brought—ay, and the necklace too—if I know any thing of the matter, ſhe is as arrant a trimmer as Mrs. Trinket herſelf. It is my opinion, that your people of fortune live as much under the harrow as we tradeſmen. But, however, it can't be help'd. If I am not miſtaken, they are both of them fools enough to give any price

price that is aſked for what they like, and it ſhall be my fault if I don't take care to aſk enough.

Enter Mrs. Dreſden.

What, Mrs. Dreſden! are you here?

Dreſden. Oh, Mr. Trinket! your humble ſervant—Pray how does my ſiſter do?

Trinket. Mighty well, I thank you, Mrs. Dreſden. Well, I have recommended you a good cuſtomer here.

Mrs. *Dreſden.* Yes, I thank you, brother Trinket—I have brought ſome laces, to ſhew Madam, here.

Trinket. I give you joy, Mrs. Dreſden, you have got a pretty pigeon to pick—and you know how to handle ſuch cuſtomers.

Mrs. *Dreſden.* I am told they have a power of money.

Trinket. O, Yes! rich as Jews, Mrs. Dreſden, but they, *(pointing to her forehead,)* you take me?

Mrs. *Dreſden.* Alack-a-day, Mr. Trinket, if we did not meet with ſuch ſort of cuſtomers ſometimes, what ſhould we poor people in buſineſs do? Your Quality indeed; will any of them let us charge what we will for our goods—they don't care, not they, for it will be a long time, if ever they mean to pay for them; and ſo you know, Mr. Trinket, it is but right that thoſe that *will* pay, ſhould pay for thoſe that *will not.*

Trinket. Certainly, Mrs. Dreſden, certainly! that has always been my method of dealing.

Mrs. *Dreſden.* To be ſure, eſpecially now, as we are ſo burdened with taxes, and this ſhop tax, partial and oppreſſive to me in particular, as my houſe, owing to the ſituation, ſtands me in two hundred a year. Without acting thus, we could not live, I mean as we ought to live. For my part, I don't ſee any reaſon why we have not a right to live juſt as well as they do—I am ſure, we are fleſh and blood, and have ſouls as well as themſelves—Marry, ſtrip them of their finery, and I fancy, we are every bit as good any day in the week.

Trinket. Ah! why not? But I hope, you have taken care to bring a good round quantity of laces.

Mrs. *Dreſden.* Let me alone, Mr. Trinket—I have got enough, I believe, and I hope not to take a ſingle yard of it back.

Trinket. Why, I believe, I have brought a tolerable quantity of things too---Back! no, no, I think I know how to manage them better, than carry any thing back.

Mrs. *Dreſden.* Ay! you know how to play your cards—you are certainly a man of very fine ſenſe, brother Trinket.

Trinket. Pretty well, as to that, Mrs. Dreſden—But harkee! the beſt on't, 'tis all ready money here.

Mrs. *Dreſden.* Why, ſo I am told—that's the life of the thing.

Trinket.

Trinket. True, ha! ha! ha! what do you think? I brought a few things here this morning, and becauſe he thought I had not brought my bill, he wanted me to carry away my things again—but I preſently produced it, and he paid it immediately without examining the articles—I was ſorry afterwards I had not charged a little more to every one.

Mrs. *Dreſden.* Well, you may make it up to yourſelf in the next bill. I find then, that he and Madam are juſt alike in that reſpect. She called at my houſe this morning, and took a fancy to a trifling ſuit of gauze that I aſked her five pounds for; and, do you know, becauſe ſhe had no more than three guineas and a half in her pocket, ſhe would not take it home with her? Ha! ha! ha! poor fooliſh people!

Trinket. Why, Mrs. Dreſden, every body cannot have ſenſe, nature has given ſome people money—and others—parts and underſtanding—hum! hum!

Mrs. *Dreſden.* True, but harkee, Mr. Trinket? I think you and I, as we are ſuch old acquaintance and relations, ſhould always be ready to do each other a good turn—it is indeed, what our duty requires us——we muſt puff off each others goods a little.

Trinket. Oh! without doubt---it would be very unfriendly not to aſſiſt each other a little——but huſh; there's ſomebody coming.

Enter a Servant.

Servant. Madam——and you, Sir, pleaſe to ſtep this way. (*Exit.*

Mrs. *Dreſden.* Now, Mr. Trinket, don't, let us forget each other.

Trinket. Mum! But pray, Mrs. Dreſden---give me leave, Madam. (*Takes her by the hand.*)

Mrs. *Dreſden.* Well, I vow, Mr. Trinket you are a very pretty gentleman.

Sharp *and* Mrs. Sharp *diſcovered drinking Tea.*

Mrs. *Sharp.* Is he dreſſed to act his part?

Sharp. Yes, and looks more like a gentleman than many that are born ſo---but huſh! here they come.

Enter Mrs. Dreſden, *followed by* Trinket.

Mrs. *Sharp.* Oh! Mrs. Dreſden!------I am very glad to ſee you!---pray come this way---here, ſit down in this chair by me. (Mrs. Dreſden *ſits, and they talk in dumb ſhew.*)

Sharp. What, Mr. Trinket! ſo you are come then? What, then I muſt give my wife theſe earrings.

Trinket. Sir, I promiſed your lady, you know, to come this evening, and I never diſappoint the ladies.

Mrs. *Sharp.*

Mrs. *Sharp*, You are very obliging, Mr. Trinket, come, pray ſit down, Mr. Trinket, you ſhall both of you drink a diſh of tea, (Mrs. Dreſden *and* Trinket *both bow, he ſits*---Sharp *takes up a book, and affects to be reading,*) and then I'll look at what you have brought.

Trinket. (*Taking ſeveral caſes from the inſide of his coat.*) Excuſe me, Madam---Will you do me the honour to look at theſe ear-rings?

Mrs. *Dreſden.* Bleſs me! what beauties!

Mrs. *Sharp.* They are very handſome, indeed! Pray what do they come to, Mr. Trinket?

Trinket. A mere trifle, Madam, only five hundred pounds.

Mrs. *Dreſden.* Well, how vaſtly cheap!

Mrs. *Sharp.* So they are, Mrs. Dreſden. (*Putting one into her ear.*)

Mrs. *Dreſden.* My gracious! Madam! how prodigiouſly they become you! what aſtoniſhing luſtre!

Trinket. They would have a much greater, Mrs. Dreſden, were they not eclipſed by Madam's eyes!

Mrs. *Sharp.* Really a very pretty compliment, don't you think ſo, Mrs. Dreſden?

Mrs. *Dreſden.* Oh, Madam! my brother-in-law, Mr. Trinket, is looked upon as a fine gentleman among us tradesfolks, I aſſure you.

Mrs. *Sharp.* And with great reaſon.

Trinket. Oh, Madam!

Mrs. *Sharp.* Come, my dear, put down your book and look at theſe ear-rings.

Sharp.

Sharp. Oh! I ſee, my dear---they are very handſome! What do they come to?

Trinket. Five hundred, Sir.

Sharp. Is that the loweſt?

Trinket. It is, Sir, but you'll pardon me, I ſhall get next to nothing by them.

Mrs. *Dreſden.* There can't be much got by them at that price, I think.

Sharp. Well, Mr. Trinket, put 'em by at your houſe, and when I can ſpare the money, I'll make my wife a preſent of them.

Trinket. Ha! ha! ha! Madam, Mr. Sharp has a mind to be merry---excuſe me, Madam, here are a handſome pair!

Mrs. *Dreſden.* Well, I proteſt!

Mrs. *Sharp.* Oh, gemini! theſe are ten times finer than the other---What taſte! oh, charming! are theſe your own taſte, Mr. Trinket?

Trinket. Madam, I flatter myſelf------but here is the necklace and aigrette belonging to them.

Mrs. *Sharp.* Oh, pray let me ſee! well, they are beauties, indeed. I muſt put them on. (*She riſes and looks in the glaſs.*) Well, I am quite delighted! Look at me, my dear---Should you know me?

Sharp. Come, come, my dear, have done playing the fool, and give Mr. Trinket his jewels.

Mrs. *Sharp.* No, indeed, I will not------Do you give Mr. Trinket the money.

Sharp. Indeed, my dear, I cannot---Come, don't be

be ſilly---Did not I deſire you, Mr. Trinket, to bring a pair of ear-rings of only five hundred pounds, and no necklace or aigrette? and now my wife has ſeen them, I ſhall have no quiet.

Trinket. Excuſe me, Sir, but your lady may well deſerve any thing that money can purchaſe---You'll pardon my freedom.

Mrs. *Sharp.* Thank you, Mr. Trinket---I fancy you make an exceeding good huſband. (Trinket *bows---they each drink a diſh of tea during the following converſation.*)

Sharp. Indeed I believe ſo---and ſo he ought---I think I had the pleaſure of ſpeaking to Mrs. Trinket yeſterday at your ſhop---I aſſure you, my dear, ſhe's a very pretty ſort of a woman.

Mrs. *Dreſden.* Yes, indeed, Sir, and ſo ſhe is.

Sharp. Much ſuperior to people in her ſtation. I'll take you there to-morrow morning, as we go into the city.

Mrs. *Sharp.* I ſhall be very much obliged to you.

Trinket. Sir—Madam—I am really—your pardon.

Mrs. *Sharp.* I am ſure, Mrs. Trinket muſt be very fond of you, Mr. Trinket.

Trinket. Ha! ha! ha! Madam, we are pretty well together.

Mrs. *Sharp.* Well, Mrs. Dreſden, now for the lace.

Sharp. Upon my ſoul, my dear, if you go on at

this rate, I am afraid you'll bring us both to a gaol.

Trinket. Ha! ha! ha! excuſe me, Sir,——but you are enough to make any body laugh.

Mrs. *Dreſden.* There Madam—there's a piece of lace!

Mrs. *Sharp.* Elegant, indeed!

Trinket. You'll pardon me, Madam, but if you would have a fine lace, and reaſonable, you muſt go to Mrs. Dreſden for it.

Mrs. *Dreſden.* You are very obliging, Mr. Trinket.

Enter Decoy.

Decoy. My Lord Bam, Sir!

Enter Shuffle.

Sharp. My dear Lord Bam!

Shuffle. Don't let me diſturb you——your moſt obedient, Madam.

Mrs. *Sharp.* My lord, will you drink a diſh of tea?

Shuffle. With all my heart.

Sharp. Well, my lord, may we give you joy of a ſon and heir yet?

Shuffle. No faith, George, we are juſt as we were yet—but ſurely—what! you are very fine in diamonds this afternoon.

Sharp.

Sharp. Yes, the young lady is entertaining herſelf.

Shuffle. Upon my honour they are very fine, and ſet with great taſte.

Mrs. *Sharp.* Yes, my lord, ſo they are—and do you know that croſs huſband of mine refuſes to give 'em to me?

Shuffle. No, ſure!

Sharp. If ſhe will tell me, my lord, where I ſhall get the money, I'll give her the ear-rings with all my heart.

Shuffle. Money! ha! ha! ha! you rich fellows always talk ſo—why you have more money than you know what to do with.

Mrs. *Sharp.* Ay, and ſo he has, my lord. (Mrs. Sharp *and* Shuffle *examine the laces, and talk apart to* Mrs. Dreſden.)

Enter Decoy.

Decoy. The wine-merchant, Sir, has brought his bill for the wine he ſent this morning.

Sharp. Don't you ſee I have company?

Decoy. He will call then in the morning. (*Going.*

Sharp. Come back—you know I will not let him go away without his money—I beg ten thouſand pardons, my lord—How much is the bill?

Decoy. Seventy-eight pounds fourteen ſhillings, Sir.

Sharp. Here, take the money out of this purſe—and do you hear? Take a receipt—Here, Decoy,

I have

I have ſomething to ſay to you, (*riſes and ſpeaks aſide to* Decoy,) Give me that money back, and bring in ſome other bill immediately. *Exit*

Mrs. *Sharp.* (*Taking up the firſt ear-rings,*) Yes, my lord, but he wants to give me theſe trumpery things.

Shuffle. O, fie! they are not fit to be ſeen after thoſe.

Re-enter Decoy.

Decoy. Sir, the coach-maker.

Sharp. Why won't theſe people come in a morning? Well, what is his bill?

Decoy. His bill, Sir, is one hundred and fifty pounds, but he had a hundred pounds of me before the coach came home.

Sharp. Well, ſee if this is fifty pounds. (*Gives him his looſe money out of his pocket.*) If you go on at this rate, I ſhall have no money left.

Decoy. If you pay all your debts in this manner, it will laſt you long enough. (*aſide.*) *Exit*

Shuffle. Come, Sharp, give your wife theſe diamonds.

Sharp. Indeed, my lord, I cannot afford it.

Shuffle. Come, come, afford it! don't tell me—I would not refuſe my wife ſuch a trifle.

Mrs. *Sharp.* (*Crying.*) Yes, but he don't love me.

Shuffle. For ſhame, Sharp, will you have your wife ſick?

Sharp.

Sharp. My lord, it is ſuch huſbands as you, that ſpoil all the women.

Mrs. *Dreſden.* I proteſt, I believe, Madam, will have a fit.

Shuffle. Come, Sharp, come, tell her ſhe ſhall have them.

Sharp. Well, if I muſt, I muſt---Let her take them.

Mrs. *Sharp.* (*Riſes, takes him round the neck and kiſſes him.*) There's a good huſband.

Sharp. Well, but my dear, you muſt ſtay a few days---I have not above half caſh enough at my banker's to pay for them.

Trinket. Oh, Sir, half will do at preſent.

Sharp. Well, what do you think they will come to?

Trinket. Why, Sir, the jewels all together, much about fifteen hundred pounds.

Sharp. Well, then, let me ſee——Pray, Mr. Trinket, what money have you about you?

Trinket. I have only what money, Sir, I received of you in the morning---fifty-ſeven pounds odd ſhillings.

Sharp. Let me ſee! ay! I have juſt eight hundred pounds at my banker's---If you'll return me that money, Mr. Trinket, it will ſave me the trouble of ſending into the city for ſo trifling a ſum, and then I will give you a draught for the whole eight hundred, which you may receive to-morrow morning.

Trinket.

Trinket. Oh, Sir! that will do vaſtly well! here, Sir, here is the money. (*during the following converſation between* Shuffle *and* Mrs. Sharp, Trinket *and* Sharp *talk apart, as if ſettling the account.*)

Shuffle. But come, do you know, I came to fetch you to my houſe; Lady Bam's quite alone, and inſiſts you ſhall go and play a game at piquet with her---It will be downright charity---you know ſhe can't go out.

Mrs. *Sharp.* Well, if my huſband will go.

Shuffle. Oh! I'll make him go.

Sharp. There Mr. Trinket, there is the note, and next week we will ſettle the whole.

Trinket. Oh, pray, Sir, don't mention it—there is no ſort of hurry, Sir. I am, your moſt obedient, Madam, I have the honour to wiſh you a good night. (*Aſide.*) I think I have made a prety good day's work of it. *Exit.*

Mrs. *Sharp.* (*Putting up the diamonds*) Well, Mrs. Dreſden, you ſee I am obliged to go out—If you will will leave your lace here to-night, I will take it with me to Lady Bam's, and we will examine it.

Mrs. *Dreſden.* Oh! to be ſure, Madam, to be ſure.

Mrs. *Sharp.* And I dare ſay, between us we ſhall take it all.

Mrs. *Dreſden.* Madam, you are very obliging.

Mrs. *Sharp.* And you may call in the morning about eleven o'clock.

Mrs.

Mrs. *Dreſden.* You are very obliging, Madam, I'll take the liberty to call.

Mrs. *Sharp.* Pray, do, Mrs. Dreſden,——good night.

Mrs. *Dreſden.* I am your moſt obedient humble ſervant. *Exit.*

Sharp. Ha! ha! ha! I never ſaw any thing better acted; Fanny, you are a Phœnix, and Shuffle you deſerve a ſtatue! (Mrs. Sharp *puts all the lace into her pocket.*)

Shuffle. Yes, but we muſt reſign the palm to you, we are but ſcholars.

Sharp. Come, we have ſomething elſe to do than to ſtand complimenting each other—We have nothing more to expect to-night; and I begin to think there is ſome danger in the affair of Lord Dupe's note—therefore let us go off as ſoon as poſſible.

Mrs. *Sharp.* Well, as I live, Mr. Trinket has left the other pair of diamond ear-rings, and a caſe of fancy-rings.

Sharp. Indeed! Why then we muſt be gone this inſtant. He will miſs them the moment he gets home, and will return immediately to fetch them, which may perhaps retard us. Where is Decoy now? S'death! we ſhall be too late—ſtay—we had better not be ſeen all going together. Shuffle do you and Fanny go immediately with theſe things, and make all poſſible haſte to Brighthelmſtone, by the Lewis road—Decoy, and I will follow in leſs than a quarter of an hour, the other road—Be gone

this moment, and make all the haſte you can out of town. Fly! (*Exit kiſſing* Mrs. Sharp.) S'death! where can Decoy be? I ſhall be ruined by this means! oh! here he comes!

Enter Decoy.

Decoy. For heaven's ſake, ſave yourſelf!

Sharp. What's the matter?

Decoy. Lord Dupe is arrived in town, and is gone, as I ſuppoſe, to his bankers.

Sharp. Then let's be gone this moment; Shuffle and Fanny are already gone—But, zounds, if I travel in this dreſs, it will certainly create ſuſpicion that I am going off—What ſhall I do? (*Exit* Decoy,) Decoy, where are you going? We ſhall certainly be too late, (*ſtanding at the ſide of the ſcene as if looking after* Decoy, *turning his head frequently to look behind him.*)

Re-enter Decoy *with a Surtout.*

Decoy. Here, Sir, this coat will prevent ſuſpicion.

Sharp. It will—quick! help me on with it; well now are you ready? (*taking up his hat and ſword.*)

Decoy. Lead the way, I'll follow.

Sharp. Now fortune favour me but for a few minutes longer. (*Going haſtily,—having got to the door.*) S'death! who are theſe,—(*turns about.*)

Decoy. Confuſion! Theſe are the ſcoundrels that I ap-

I appointed to come for their money at nine o'clock, and here they are, two hours before their time.

Sharp. Oh! I'll manage them.

Enter Reniſh, Phæton, Tart, *and* Tinſel, *they remain all together next the Door.*

Sharp. (*As they enter.*) 'Tis falſe! I ſay, you could not miſtake me; (*loud to* Decoy,) I am poſitive I told you ſeven o'clock, I knew the money would be brought here by ſix, and you know how nice I am in theſe things; you are ſenſible I can't bear to owe a ſhilling a moment longer than is neceſſary; beſides, the riſk of having ſo large a ſum of money in the houſe. S'death! nine o'clock! run directly, and deſire the gentlemen to come and fetch away their money this inſtant.

Decoy. Sir, the gentlemen are come.

Sharp. (*Turning about,*) Oh! gentlemen, your ſervant, (*to* Decoy,) I ſhall talk to you another time, Sir.—I am very ſorry, gentlemen, you did not come ſooner, but I find it is that fellow's fault; I've been waiting to go out this half hour; I aſſure you I want much to be gone, but I was reſolved not to ſtir till I had paid your bills.

Reniſh. Your honour is very good.

Sharp. I am very ſorry, gentlemen, this money has been ſo long owing; I hope you don't imagine——

Reniſh. Oh, no! bleſs your honour! we were not afraid of our money.

Sharp. I'll take care, gentlemen, it ſhall not be ſo another time.

Reniſh. I hope your honour don't think we were preſſing.

Sharp. No, by no means—If you'll do me the favour to ſtep into that room, you ſhall have your money this inſtant, (*to* Decoy,) now, go, and deſire the reſt of the gentlemen to come immediately, I'm determined to pay every body to-night—Here, help me off with my coat.

Phæton. (*Aſide to* Reniſh,) You find Mr. Decoy is going out; we ſhan't ſee him again; you had better give him the money now.

Reniſh. I will, I will.

Decoy. Now, gentlemen, if you pleaſe to ſtep this way, (*goes to the back ſcene, and opens the door.*)

Reniſh. (*In paſſing by* Decoy,) We are very ſorry, Mr. Decoy, you ſhould have anger on our accounts; be ſo kind, Sir, as to accept of a ſmall preſent. (*Gives* Decoy *a purſe, who bows, they all enter the door, which* Sharp *immediately locks.*)

Sharp. Now then, I think we have ſecured our retreat. Come, quick, Decoy, help me on again with my great coat. (*While he is putting on the coat enter* Buckram.)

Buck. I am your honour's moſt obedient, moſt devoted, humble ſervant.

Sharp. Zounds! that fellow too! oh, Mr. Buckram! I was afraid you would not come; I was juſt

juſt putting on my coat, as you ſee, to come to your houſe with the money.

Buck. Your honour does me a great deal of honour.

Sharp. How ſhall I get rid of this ſcoundrel?—Well then, now Decoy, carry the money yourſelf, and call at my lord's in your way——but, harkee! I have thought another way of managing the matter—Mr. Buckram, you'll excuſe me.

Buck. Oh, pray, your honour, don't mind me.

Sharp. (*Aſide to* Decoy.) I think it is much better we ſhou'd not be ſeen going through the ſtreets together, therefore, make all the haſte you can to the bridge foot, and there wait for me, I'll follow you immediately, (*aloud,*) you are ſure you underſtand me.

Decoy. Perfectly, Sir, I ſhall take care to obſerve your orders. (*Exit.*

Sharp. Now, Mr. Buckram, if you pleaſe, I'll put an end to the affair with you in a moment.

Buck. Your honour's moſt humble ſervant.

Sharp. If you will be ſo kind to ſtep into this room, I will wait upon you this inſtant.

Buck. Your honour's moſt obedient humble ſervant.

(Sharp *opens the door on the ſide of the ſtage, and* Buckram *enters, whilſt* Sharp *is locking the door after him. Enter* Gripe *behind him.*)

Gripe. Oh! my dear friend, Mr. Sharp! I am very glad I have found you at home!

Sharp. S'death! what a piece of ill fortune! (*aſide*)

Gripe. So, ſo, I find Sir William is an arrant cheat; zounds, Sir, he has robb'd me of four hundred pounds.

Sharp. I'm heartily glad 'tis no more—a cheat! yes, yes, he is a cheat—why he has defrauded me of above twice that ſum.

Gripe. Indeed! S'blood, Sir, what can we do?

Sharp. Why, I'll tell you; I am now waiting here for him, I expect him back every moment, and I have placed proper people to ſeize him as ſoon as he comes into the houſe.

Gripe. That's right.

Sharp. If you'll ſtep up ſtairs, I'll come to you the moment I have ſecured him, and then we will conſult together what to do.

Gripe. No, no, I'll ſtay here with you.

Sharp. Oh! no, no, by no means; you'll entirely ruin all my ſchemes if you ſhould; he does not know that I have detected him; but if he ſhould happen to ſee you, he'll endeavour to make his eſcape immediately.

Gripe. That's true, well then, I'll go up ſtairs and wait till you come.

Sharp. Do ſo, (*Exit* Gripe,) and if you do, I believe you'll wait long enough. (*A great noiſe.*) Confuſion! (*Liſtens.*) I fear thoſe are the conſtables come to take me up for Lord Dupe's note—then I am loſt, (*locks the door,*) What can I do? I am determined not to ſuffer an ignominious death!

no—

no—as I have lived like a man of ſpirit, ſo I will die, or make my way through the ſcoundrels, (*drawing his ſword, and putting himſelf in a poſture of defence.*) S'death! they will force open the door—but I have a thought; now for the maſter ſtroke. (*runs to the oppoſite ſide ſcene, and as the conſtables enter the room, ſpeaks very loud.*) 'Tis very well, Sir, but though you have defrauded me of my money, and would have taken away my life, I ſhall, I hope, yet be able to bring you to juſtice. (*Turns about.*) Oh! gentlemen, you have ſaved my life, that villain, Mr. Sharp, the maſter of this houſe, has defrauded me of a very large ſum of money; he had locked the door, and would have murdered me but for the noiſe your coming made.

Conſtable. Oh! he's a ſad villain, indeed! Pray, Sir, which way did he go?

Sharp. Hearing you coming, gentlemen, he took to his heels and ran up ſtairs, I ſuppoſe, with a deſign to make his eſcape over the top of the houſe.

Conſtable. Then we have him——come along, gentlemen, take care and have all your wits about you; this affair muſt be managed with ſenſe and underſtanding, therefore follow me, gentlemen.

(*Exit Conſtables, &c.*

Sharp. (*Bowing after them,*) Gentlemen, your very humble ſervant! (*bowing to the back ſcene,*) and you, gentlemen in that room, your very humble ſervant! (*bowing to the ſide ſcene,*) and my dear

friend, Mr. Gripe above ſtairs, your very humble ſervant! (*bowing to the oppoſite door,*) and maſter Buckram, there, your moſt obedient, moſt devoted, humble ſervant! (*bowing all around.*) In ſhort, gentlemen, your humble ſervant all together. (*Exit. ſlapping the door after him, and locking it on the other ſide.*)

Back Scene opens and diſcovers Reniſh, &c.

Reniſh. So he is, Mr. Phaeton—I never ſaw a more politer, good humoured gentleman in all my life.

Phæton. Yes, but the beſt of it is, he is ſo nice of his honour—Did not you mind how angry he was with Mr. Decoy, for not appointing us to come ſooner. I always thought he would pay us as ſoon as he had money—'tis a pleaſure to deal with ſuch gentlemen.

Tinſel. Yes, and did not you mind, as how, he ſaid, we were all gentlemen too? La! he is as familiar with every one of us as if we were old acquaintance.

Reniſh. If I had but a ſcore of ſuch cuſtomers, I believe, I ſhould not carry on buſineſs much longer.

Phæton. No, no——a ſcore of ſuch cuſtomers would do for us all very ſoon. I really did not think, we ſhould be paid ſo ſoon; though I think we diſpoſed of the twenty guineas we gave Mr. Decoy tolerably well.

Reniſh.

Reniſh. Yes, I don't think the money is ill laid out.

Phæton. Pray, Mr. Reniſh, how are ſtocks now?

Reniſh. Why, Sir, I believe it is a very good time to buy in.

Phæton. That's lucky, indeed! I intend to lay out all the money I ſhall receive here to-morrow morning.

Reniſh. Why, I intend to do ſo too.

Phæton. Well then, ſhall we go together?

Reniſh. With all my heart.

Phæton. I will have the pleaſure then, Sir, to attend you. (*A great noiſe.*)

Reniſh. Hey day! What the deuce is all this noiſe.

Phæton. Oh! I ſuppoſe his honour has not done ſcolding Mr. Decoy about us; he was in a moſt violent paſſion to be ſure. (*Noiſe again behind the Scenes, and knocking at the ſide door.*)

Reniſh. Hey! the devil! why the houſe is haunted ſure! Where can his honour be all this time? I thought he ſaid he was coming to us directly. (*Noiſe again.*) I'll ſee what is the matter. (*tires to open the ſide door,*) Why gentlemen, what can be the meaning of all this? Why—why the door is locked.

Phæton. The door locked! Why ſure, gentlemen, I hope they have not put a trick upon us.

Enter Conſtables *from the oppoſite Side Scene.*

1*ſt. Conſtable.* Oh! here they are! Theſe are ſome of the accomplices, ſeize them! though he has

has eſcaped himſelf, we'll take care and ſecure theſe gentlemen.

Reniſh. For heaven's ſake, gentlemen, what is the matter? Eſcaped, did you ſay? Who has eſcaped? Who have you come to look for?

1ſt. Conſtable. For you, Sir! What a gang of them there is! I never, ſaw ſuch a number of ill-looking fellows in all my life.

Reniſh. For heaven's ſake, gentlemen, you miſtake us; we are nothing but a ſet of honeſt, induſtrious tradeſmen, that are come here for what is due to us.

1ſt. Conſtable. Yes, yes, induſtrious enough, I believe—come along with us gentlemen, and we'll take care you ſhall receive what is due to you. Bring them along, (*a noiſe at the door where* Buckram *entered,*) Stay, gentlemen, I fancy there are more of them in that room, (*noiſe again,*) Ay, ay, theſe muſt be more of them. Force that door directly. (*They break open the door and drag out* Buckram.)

Buck. Gentlemen! pray! I beg, gentlemen!—What do mean?

1ſt. Conſtable. Zounds! that fellow is one of the head of the gang.

Buck. Oh! lord! gentlemen! I beg your pardon, upon my honour! I am nothing but an honeſt taylor.

1ſt. Conſtable. Honeſt! and a taylor! Oh! to be ſure—bring them along, I ſay.

Enter Gripe, *brought in by two* Conſtables.

1*ſt. Conſtable.* Hey day! What, more of them.

Gripe. Where the devil are you going to carry me to?

2*d. Conſtable.* Oh! we ſhall find a place to carry you to—This fellow, by his looks, has been an old offender. Come, come, away with them. (*Noiſe at the Key-hole.*

Trinket *behind the Scenes.*

Trinket. Mr. Sharp! Mr. Sharp!

1*ſt. Conſtable.* Hiſt! did not ſome body name his name?

Trinket. Mr. Sharp! Mr. Sharp!

2*d. Conſtable.* Silence, gentlemen! this muſt be another accompliſh. (*Puts his ear to the Key-hole.*)

Trinket. I beg your pardon, Sir, for giving you ſo much trouble, but I have left two ſmall caſes behind me.

1*ſt. Conſtable.* Oh! damn it! he is come to fetch away more of the things—you ſhall come in directly.

Trinket. Thank you, Sir, I am very ſorry to trouble you.

2*d. Conſtable.* As ſoon as the door opens do you ſeize him, (Conſtables *burſt open the door, and as* Trinket *enters they ſeize him,*) you left two ſmall caſes,

caſes, did you? Mind, gentlemen! he had confeſſed himſelf.

Trinket. Really, gentlemen, I don't know what you mean; I expected to have found Mr. Sharp here.

2d. Conſtable. Yes, yes, I know you did. Well, come, I fancy we have got them all now; therefore let us take them all together to the juſtice; I'll know how to deal with them; come, bring them along.

Enter Furniſh—*an Inventory in his Hand.*

Furniſh. What's the matter, gentlemen?

1ſt. Conſtable. Oh! he has eſcaped himſelf, but we have taken all the accompliſhes.

Furniſh. Ay! I fancy I know them, if you have; pray let me ſee them?

1ſt. Conſtable. Pray, Sir, who are you?

Furniſh. I am the upholſterer that let the houſe, and live over the way—No, theſe are none of them, the cheats you look for.

2d. Conſtable. What, do you know them all?

Furniſh. Yes, I do; you may venture to ſet theſe gentlemen at liberty.

Trinket. What, Sir, is Mr. Sharp gone off?

Furniſh. Yes, Sir, he is gone off. I ſaw the conſtables enter the houſe to apprehend him; ſoon learnt the cauſe; ſaw him run out, muffled up in a ſurtout, and came over here immediately.

1ſt. Conſtable. What the plague! was it him we met

met on our firſt coming in then? Unbind thoſe gentlemen, and after him immediately; we may catch him yet perhaps. (*Exit* Conſtables.

Gripe. Hell and the devil! Then I have loſt my three thouſand pounds I lent him, beſides the four hundred this morning. (*Walks about in diſorder.*)

Trinket. What have I been ſlaving all this while to make this fellow's fortune? I ſhall run diſtracted! and then my ſiſter Dreſden too! (*Walks about.*)

Buck. Oh, Heavens! then I am ruined and undone!

Furniſh. Well, gentlemen, I fancy when you are ſet at liberty, you will have no farther buſineſs here.

Reniſh. Yes, yes, but we have, Sir,—Harkee me, gentlemen, we'll make ourſelves ſome little amends by dividing the furniture.

Furniſh. Gentlemen, I fancy you will make yourſelves but little amends by that.

Reniſh. I don't think ſo; it ſeems all very good, beſides, if it be ever ſo little, it is better than nothing. Before we go away, let us lock up all the doors, and take away the keys with us.

Furniſh. Pray, gentlemen, don't give yourſelves that trouble, I'll take care and lock up the doors, and carry away the keys.

Reniſh. What have you to do with the keys?

Furniſh. Oh! nothing at all, Sir! only the furniture happens to belong to me, that's all.

Reniſh. Belong to you, Sir?

Furniſh.

Furniſh. Yes, Sir, belong to me.

Reniſh. The devil! then we have no way left to make up our loſs.

Furniſh. I fancy you have always enough to make up your loſs. But harkee me; I ſhould be glad if you would go about your buſineſs; I want to ſee if none of my furniture is already taken way——and do you hear? take my advice, and don't endeavour to get rich ſo ſoon. You are rightly ſerved; he has but played your own game upon you. It is ſuch people as you, that hurts the reputation of men of credit in buſineſs; but, I hope, this will be a leſſon to you, and teach you, that by endeavouring to impoſe upon others, you become liable to be impoſed upon yourſelves. Remember that honeſty is the beſt policy.

The art of trade is in your *ſhameful* plan,
To bite the ignorant when'er you can;
Therefore, in common juſtice 'tis but fit,
That all ſuch *biters* ſhould *themſelves* be bit.

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FINIS.